

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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ICA-11 IO-13 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 OES-07 NRC-05 /117 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5536
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

CONFIDENTIAL BUENOS AIRES 3280

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, ENRG, TECH, AR
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE PRESS COMMENTS ON USSR DECISION TO SIGN
TLATELOLCO

1. THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY LEONID BREZHNEV AT THE 18TH SOVIET
PARTY CONGRESS THAT THE USSR WILL SIGN PROTOCOL II OF
THE TREATY OF TLATELOLCO RECEIVED WIDE NEWSPAPER COVERAGE
AND COMMENT IN ARGENTINA. HOWEVER, THERE HAS NOT BEEN
ANY OFFICIAL RESPONSE FROM GOA MFA (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS). OR CNEA (NATIONAL COMMISSION OF ATOMIC ENERGY)
SOURCES. (SINCE CASTRO MADERO IS OUT OF THE COUNTRY UNTIL
NEXT WEEK, THERE MOST LIKELY WILL NOT BE ANY COMMENT FROM
CNEA UNTIL THAT TIME.)

2. MOST OF THE COMMENTARY LINKED THE RUSSIAN DECISION
WITH DISCUSSIONS HELD IN MOSCOW RECENTLY WITH THE CUBAN
FOREIGN MINISTER. THE PRESS STORIES INDICATED THAT BREZHNEV
HAD MENTIONED THE USSR SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA AND THE
US POSITION IN GUANTANAMO BAY, AS WELL AS US NUCLEAR
SUBMARINES IN PUERTO RICO, AS THE REASONS FOR THEIR
RELUCTANCE TO SIGN THE TREATY. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS,
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HE FURTHER STATED THE USSR WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO REDUCE
WORLD NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AND IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH
THE US ON ARMS CONTROL AND REDUCTION, AS WELL AS THE
DECISIONS TO CANCEL PLANS FOR THE NEUTRON BOMB BY BOTH
COUNTRIES. BREZHNEV INDICATED THAT THE SIGNING OF TLATELOLCO WAS
THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP IN THIS PROCESS.

3. MOST ARGENTINE EDITORIAL COMMENTARY INDICATED THAT LATIN AMERICAN DIPLOMATS NOW FEEL THAT IF THE USSR DOES FOLLOW THROUGH AND SIGN AND RATIFY PROTOCOL II, CUBA HAS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO SIGN AND RATIFY TLATELOLCO AND WILL PERHAPS RECEIVE SOME PRESSURE FROM MOSCOW TO DO SO. THIS SHOULD ALSO IMPROVE USSR RELATIONS WITH MANY LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

4. ALSO MENTIONED IN PRESS EDITORIALS WAS THAT ARTICLE 18 OF THE TLATELOLCO TREATY DOES NOT PROHIBIT PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS WHICH WOULD ALSO IMPLY KNOWING THE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE FABRICATION OF A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION DEVICE. MOST LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES AGREE THAT ARTICLE 18 CARRIES THE CONNOTATION THAT THE TREATY DOES NOT IMPEDE PEACEFUL EXPLOSIONS. HOWEVER, THE ADVANCED NUCLEAR COUNTRIES DO NOT RECOGNIZE THIS PART OF THE TREATY SINCE THEY BELIEVE THE FABRICATION OF ANY NUCLEAR DEVICE COULD LEAD TO A WEAPONS PROGRAM. IN ADDITION, THE SITUATION IS BECOMING EVEN MORE COMPLICATED NOW WITH THE STRICT SYSTEM OF NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS AND INSPECTIONS IMPOSED ON LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES BY THE ADVANCED NUCLEAR COUNTRIES, AND THE FACT THAT AFTER RATIFICATION OF TLATELOLCO, A COUNTRY MUST ACCEPT FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS WITH IAEA WITHIN 18 MONTHS. THIS COULD PRESENT A PROBLEM FOR SOME OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. (PRESS COMMENTS DID NOT MENTION PARTICULAR COUNTRIES NOR WAS THERE ANY CONFIDENTIAL

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MENTION THAT US HAS NOT YET RATIFIED PROTOCOL I OF TLATELOLCO NOR OF THE FRENCH NOT HAVING SIGNED OR RATIFIED PROTOCOL I.)

6. COMMENTS: CNEA OFFICIALS TOLD SCICOUNS UNOFFICIALLY THAT THE USSR'S MOVE TOWARD RATIFICATION OF PROTOCOL II, THE US COMMITMENT TO RATIFY PROTOCOL I, AND THE FACT THAT CUBA WILL PROBABLY ENTER INTO THE TREATY, SHOULD PAVE THE WAY FOR ARGENTINA TO RATIFY TLATELOLCO AT THE SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT WITHOUT ANY CONDITIONS FOR ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE TREATY. PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS ARE ANOTHER PROBLEM THAT IS STILL BEING DEBATED WITHIN GOA CIRCLES WITHOUT YET REACHING ANY CONCLUSIONS.

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